

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Context

In the current pandemic conditions, some of students are encouraged to study from home to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The lecturers and students use several applications such as WhatsApp, Google Form, Zoom, and so on to facilitate the learning process, in order to the learning process able to run effectively. However, due to paying attention to the psychology of students and seeing the decline in Covid-19 cases, the government finally allowed several educational institutions to conduct face-to-face learning, but still with some rules, such as limiting the number of students in the face-to-face learning system and apply strict health protocols. Therefore, several educational institutions have already decided to use blended learning as a learning system amid this pandemic.

The application of the blended learning system at IAIN Madura campus is to combine a limited face-to-face system (consisting of approximately 20 students in one class) with distance learning. For instance, if the first and second weeks hold online classes, then the third and fourth weeks hold offline classes, and vice versa. Or if the first week is online, then the second week is offline, and so on. But it is according to the agreement between lecturer and students itself. Distance learning is implemented using an E-learning system.

And in the limited face-to-face learning, students are allowed to choose whether they will attend limited face-to-face learning or distance learning.

According to Hom and Staker in Khe and Wing's book, blended learning is a process of learning where some of the students study in a place that is far from their house, such as school, which gets full of supervision from that school, while others students learn to use the internet with some of the control element about time, place, and pace.¹ Norman, Martha, and Randy make it narrow by stating that blended learning is the integration of face-to-face and online learning activities.² The blended learning system is an alternative method used by several schools or campuses to be able to carry out learning effectively, even amid the current COVID-19 pandemic. In blended learning, teachers or lecturer can combine face-to-face learning and learning that utilizes technological devices. For instance, the lecturer explains the material directly, while the students can use several applications such as Google Form, WhatsApp, YouTube, and so on for the assignment submission.

The application of a blended learning system has also been applied in learning English, including in speaking 1 class. Before there is a pandemic, the speaking 1 lecturer teaches interactively with students. Students are invited to communicate freely both with the lecturer and between friends regarding the material in accordance with the Semester Learning Outcome (RPS). At the beginning of the class, students were asked about the current topic and then ask

¹ Khee Foon Hew and Wing Sum Cheung, *Using Blended Learning Evidence-Based Practice* (Singapore: Springer, 2014), 2.

² Norman D. Vaughan, Martha Cleveland-Innes, and D. Randy Garrison, *Teaching in Blended Learning Environments* (Canada: AU Press, 2013), 8.

several questions to find out how well students understood the topic to be discussed. Furthermore, expanding the discussion of the material by providing opportunities for students to share their respective knowledge about the material in turn.

In other hand, when the pandemic come to our country, a learning system at IAIN Madura also change. The lecturer starts to apply blended learning as the rule from campus. The speaking 1 lecturer holds an online lecturer when the lecturer cannot attend class as agreed by the lecturer and students. The rest of the speaking 1 hold lecturer offline. When the class is online, the speaking 1 lecturer used Whatsapp media by sending voice notes to explain the material. After explaining, the speaking 1 lecturer gave the task of making a video about the material that had been explained either individually or in groups accompanied by a collection deadline. Then, the video is uploaded to one of the social media that students can choose, such as YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok. After that, the students send the video link on the IAIN Madura E-learning platform. And to be absent during online classes, students are asked to log in E-learning, but the students are more likely to fill out the list on the WhatsApp Group according to the absence.

While if the speaking class is offline, the speaking 1 lecturer teaches interactively with students but is more active in speaking and mastering the class. The Speaking 1 lecturer tries to make students speak English a lot, both to lecturer and to fellow students. For absenteeism, the Speaking 1 lecturer takes attendance manually and does not use e-learning.

Rebecca said that through teaching speaking, sometimes the lecturer has other aims, such as teaching another aspect of language. The lecturer wants the students to practice their grammatical rules, apply a phonemic regularity, develop their rhythm, and intonation, and make the students aware of socio-linguistic or pragmatics.³ Learning to speak has an important role for English students because through speaking, someone will know whether students' understanding of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary has been assessed as good enough or not. Because in speaking, three aspects usually become a measure of students' fluency. In addition, students' ability to speak English will also make students ready to face the developments of the globalization era, where foreign companies are starting to enter Indonesia. So, to facilitate their interactions, good English skills and confidence to speak are needed in public speaking.

However, some common problems often occur in the middle of the speaking learning process, including low student confidence to speak in front of the general public. It can be seen when learning to speak in class, most of the students are still reluctant to speak English in front of their friends. Sometimes, there are some expressions of students' anxiety in speaking in English. Some students are embarrassed when asked by the lecturer for public speaking. These problems also happen when learning speaking conduct online. Furthermore, some obstacles also add to the problems in the learning speaking through online learning, such as signal difficulties to participate in speaking lessons for students who live in villages, especially in process of uploading the

³ Rebecca Hughes, *Teaching and Researching Speaking* (London: Pearson Education, 2002), 6.

assignment that need a long time. Also, process of making video become a problem for the students, because it requires a large storage space on the students' gadget that sometimes the students' gadget do not support for it. In addition, the existence of rules from the campus that the lecturer are prohibited to use applications that waste quotas too much is a problem for the lecturer to teach speaking that commonly it will be more comfortable if conducted face-to-face, although utilizing an application such as Zoom. In this case, if learning speaking is conducted through blended learning, the problem is not only from the students but also from the students' environment.

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested to know English students' perceptions about the application of blended learning system, especially in the students of speaking 1 class at IAIN Madura. Therefore, the researcher is interested in the research with the title "English Students' Perceptions about Blended Learning for Students of Speaking 1 Class at IAIN Madura in the 2021/2022 Academic Year".

B. Research Focus

Research problems are the educational issues, controversies, or concerns that guide the need for conducting a study.⁴ Based on the research context as described above, this research is focused on the formulation of the problem as follows:

1. How are the English students' perceptions about the blended learning system for the students of speaking 1 class at IAIN Madura?

⁴ John W. Creswell, *Educational Research Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, Fourth Edition (Boston: Pearson, 2012), 59.

2. How are the English students' obstacles during the application of blended learning in speaking 1 class at IAIN Madura?

C. Research Objective

John W. Creswell stated in his book that a purpose is the major intent or objective of the study used to address the problem.⁵ Research objective usually consists of the aim that wants to be achieved by the researcher through the research. Based on the research focus above, the researcher has the following objectives to be achieved:

1. To know the English students' perceptions about the blended learning system for the students of speaking 1 class at IAIN Madura.
2. To identify the English students' obstacles during the application of blended learning in speaking 1 class at IAIN Madura.

D. Research Significance

The significance of the study is describing the usefulness or urgency of the research, either scientific use (theoretical) as well as social use (practical).⁶ So, the significance of the study consists of an explanation of the benefits of research, especially benefits for the education, teachers, and the researcher itself. The researcher divided the significance of this study into some aspects as follows:

1. Theoretical

The results of this research expected to broaden the horizon of teacher or lecturer in developing Blended Learning system, especially in speaking

⁵ John W. Creswell, *Educational Research Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, Fourth Edition (Boston: Pearson, 2012), 60.

⁶ Tim Penyusun, *Pedoman Karya Tulis Ilmiah* (Pamekasan: Institut Agama Islam Negeri Madura, 2020), 19.

class. Also, this study may be used as an additional reference to further education and research.

2. Practical

a. For Lecturer

This study aims to find out directly about English students' perceptions about the application of blended learning, especially in the students of speaking class at IAIN Madura. Knowing the students' perceptions can be a review or evaluation for the lecturer about the application of blended learning itself in the speaking class.

b. For Researcher

The results of this research will give the experience and knowledge about the alternative of teaching method such as blended learning that can be used by the lecturer, especially in speaking classes. Moreover, the researcher will know the students' perceptions as an outcome of applying strategies themselves.

c. For Students

Through knowing the students' perceptions of the blended learning system, it will be an input for the lecturer in carrying out the learning process using the blended learning system. The lecturer will implement the learning system according with the students' convenience. So that, the students can play an active role in learning. Also, the students will find the learning process easier, more enjoyable, and can to increase students' interest and understanding.

E. Definition of Key Terms

Definition of key terms or operational definitions is required to avoid differences in meaning or lack of clarity of meaning.⁷ To avoid readers' misunderstanding and difficulties in clarifying the key term, the researcher wants to explain the term, as follows:

1. Students' Perception

Students' perception can be defined as responses that shown by the students regarding the learning process that they felt. It can be seen by the students' enthusiasm, comprehension, even the students' activeness during ongoing learning process.

2. Blended Learning

Blended learning is one of an approach in education that combines conventional learning like face-to-face learning in the classroom with digital learning that utilizes technological development.

3. Speaking class

Speaking class is a class that has a purpose to improve students' speaking skills through intensive training that focuses on the ability to convey information, feelings, or thoughts in verbal or spoken language. This class also focuses on developing students' self-confidence, fluency in pronunciation, even in vocabulary expansion.

⁷ Tim Penyusun, *Pedoman Karya Tulis Ilmiah* (Pamekasan: Institut Agama Islam Negeri Madura, 2020), 19.

F. Previous Study

The researcher found the study written by Alma Sri Andriyani entitled “Students’ Perception in Learning English Through Blended Learning”.⁸ This study shows that there are positive responses and negative perceptions from some participants. Some students agree with offline learning but disagree with online learning. The students who agree with offline learning said that they feel more comfortable and more understanding when getting an explanation of the subject matter from the teacher directly. On the other hand, when the explanation is delivered online, the students find the difficulties to understand it. On the other hand, students who agree with online learning reason said that they are more focused when learning is delivered online. They are also very focused when doing the tasks given by the teacher.

The last, the researcher also found the study written by Nirmala Elmin Simbolon entitled “EFL Students’ Perceptions of Blended Learning in English Language Course: Learning Experience and Engagement”.⁹ In this study, it is explained that there are several benefits that the students get from using blended learning, such as increasing students' vocabulary through social media, and the usage of WhatsApp which is considered efficient as a medium for language learning during online learning. However, there are also student concerns in implementing the blended learning system, including the lack of clear explanations about the learning tasks that they receive, and also about

⁸ Alma Sri Andriyani, “Students’ Perception in Learning English through Blended Learning” (Thesis, Muhammadiyah University of Kendari, Kendari, 2021), 58-59.

⁹ Nurmala Elmin Simbolon, “EFL Students’ Perceptions of Blended Learning in English Language Course: Learning Experience and Engagement,” *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 11, no. 1 (March, 2021): 169, <https://doi.org/10.23971/jefl.v11i1.2518>.

their limitations in using information technology. So, in this case, the teachers are expected to be able to choose the tools of technology that is indeed suitable for the needs of students, and the teacher must prepare solutions if there are technical problems when learning online.

The similarity of this research with the previous researches is the researcher focuses on students' perception of blended learning usage as a system in learning English. Next, the differences between this research with the previous researches are for the first previous research, the researcher focuses on the students at South Konawe Junior High School as the subject of research, while in this research, the researcher focuses on the students who join Speaking 1 class at IAIN Madura as the subject of research. And the difference between this research with the second previous research is the researcher focuses on students' perception of blended learning usage as a system in learning English generally. It means that the researcher do not explain the specific course/subject in English language itself. While in this research, the researcher focuses in students' who learn English language, especially in Speaking 1 subject